

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2539

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness

**Title:** An act relating to methamphetamine task forces.

**Brief Description:** Concerning methamphetamine task forces.

**Sponsors:** Representatives O'Brien, VanDeWege, Green, Simpson and Loomis.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness: 1/21/08, 1/24/08 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) to accept applications and distribute grants for the operation of local methamphetamine task forces and methamphetamine prevention programs.
- Appropriates \$1 million to the DCTED for providing the methamphetamine grants to local methamphetamine task forces.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives O'Brien, Chair; Hurst, Vice Chair; Pearson, Ranking Minority Member; Ross, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Goodman and Kirby.

**Staff:** Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

**Background:**

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive substance that affects the central nervous system. Over the last several years the Legislature has placed restrictions on not only the sale and distribution of items that are used to manufacture methamphetamine, but has also increased penalties for those convicted of manufacturing, delivering, or possessing methamphetamine.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Many local law enforcement agencies have created methamphetamine task forces to help combat the problem of methamphetamine and to help raise awareness to the resources that are available to communities and those individuals struggling with a methamphetamine addiction.

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) provides technical and financial assistance to local governments and community-based organizations. Among other responsibilities, the DCTED solicits and allocates federal funding for local drug task forces.

In the 2005-07 biennium, the DCTED distributed approximately \$9.5 million in federal funding to support multi-jurisdictional narcotics task forces and other law enforcement needs. Of that total amount, a portion of the funding was distributed as follows:

- approximately \$4.1 million to local units of government to continue multi-jurisdictional narcotics task forces;
- approximately \$660,000 to the Drug Prosecution Assistance Program in support of multi-jurisdictional narcotics task forces; and
- approximately \$1.4 million to the Washington State Patrol for support to multi-jurisdictional narcotics task forces and for methamphetamine education and response.

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### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The DCTED must accept grant applications from local law enforcement agencies, local jurisdictions, and community organizations seeking funding for the costs associated with the operation of a methamphetamine task force or methamphetamine prevention program.

Before seeking state funds, each applicant must make a dollar-for-dollar match, using either cash resources or in-kind funds. Funds allocated by the state must be used to supplement, not supplant, existing methamphetamine task force funds and resources. Grants awarded to local law enforcement agencies must be used solely for the operation costs associated with a methamphetamine task force. Applicants are encouraged to consider regional agreements for the efficient delivery of distributed funds.

Grant awards are limited to those applicants located in counties with populations of less than 400,000. Grants are capped at \$100,000 per recipient and any recipients receiving a grant may not receive more than one grant per biennium.

A total of \$1 million is appropriated from the General Fund to the DCTED to fund the local methamphetamine grants.

### **Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The bill is amended to specifically authorize the local jurisdictions and community organizations to apply for methamphetamine grant funds as well as law enforcement agencies. In addition, the amount of grant funds that a single applicant may receive is capped at \$100,000 and an expiration date of June 30, 2009, is added for the entire grant program to end.

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**Appropriation:** The sum of \$1 million is appropriated from the General Fund to the DCTED.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Organized retail theft costs the industry billions of dollars each year. Many of those thefts are due to methamphetamine users. The retail industry has been working with law enforcement throughout the state to help reduce the methamphetamine problem and hopefully this legislation will help reduce methamphetamine-related crimes in Washington.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Vicky Marin, Washington Retail Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.